

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Priority Claim

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner acknowledge the claim of foreign priority. The present application is a continuation of PCT application PCT/FR 00/01137 filed on April 28, 2000, which claims priority to French Patent application FR 99/05444 filed on April 29, 1999.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1, 4-9, and 12-18 are currently pending in this application.* Claims 1, 9, and 17-18 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 1 and 9.

Claim Amendments

Claims 1, 9, and 17-18 have been amended to remove conditional language (*e.g.*, “if”). Support for the amendments may be found, for example, on pages 8 and 9 of the application. No new matter has been added by any of the aforementioned amendments.

* On page 2 of the Action, the Examiner has incorrectly indicated that claim 19 is pending.

Request for Examiner Interview

Applicant respectfully requests an Examiner Interview to discuss the referenced application at a date and time convenient for all parties. An Applicant Initiated Interview Request Form is attached to this reply.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 112

Claims 1, 4-9, and 12-18[†] have been rejected for failing to comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. To the extent that this rejection applies to the amended claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1, 9, and 17-18 have been amended to remove optional language from the claims and, thus, the claims now satisfy 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Further, claims 2-8 and 10-16 depend, directly or indirectly, from amended independent claims 1 or 9, and thus, also satisfy 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

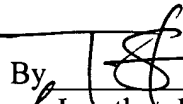
[†]Applicant notes that the Examiner has indicated that claim 19 is rejected. However, claim 19 is not pending in the referenced application. In view of the rejection, it appears the Examiner meant to reject independent claims 1, 8, 17, and 18. Accordingly, the Applicant has responded to the rejection on this basis.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 09669/012001).

Dated:

Respectfully submitted,

By  #45,079
Jonathan P. Osha ~~THOMAS SCHERER~~
Registration No.: 33,986
OSHA · LIANG LLP
1221 McKinney St., Suite 2800
Houston, Texas 77010
(713) 228-8600
(713) 228-8778 (Fax)
Attorney for Applicant

Attachment (Interview Request Form)